

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8652

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 6674

NODIS

DEPT PASS CAIRO NIACT IMMEDIATE

FOR SISCO FROM TOON

REF: STATE 249662

1. AT MT. SCOPUS HOSPITAL DEDICATION CEREMONY THIS MORNING, I HAD BRIEF EXCHANGE WITH RABIN ON CARGO TRANSIT PROBLEM. PRIME MINISTER MADE CLEAR HE COULD NOT DEFEND TO CABINET DECISION TO CANCEL OCT. 22 TRANSIT CANAL UNLESS HE HAD IN HAND FIRM ASSURANCES THAT EGYPTIANS WOULD CONFISCATE ANY SOUTH AFRICAN CARGO REGARDLESS OF CONSIGNEE. I TOLD RABIN I HOPED TO HAVE AFFIRMATIVE REPLY ON THIS POINT LATER IN DAY, BUT MEANWHILE I WOULD URGE HIM TO INSURE THROUGH CONTINGENCY ARRANGEMENTS THAT SHIP COULD BE REROUTED AT LAST MOMENT. RABIN SAID PROBLEM WAS MANAGEABLE.

2. LATER IN DAY, AFTER RECEIPT OF DEPARTMENT'S FLASH REFTEL SUBSTANCE OF WHICH WAS RELAYED TO ME IN JERUSALEM, I TRIED TO SEE RABIN TO CONVEY TO HIM FAHMY'S ASSURANCES BUT PRIME MINISTER WAS CLOSETED WITH IMPORTANT VISITORS AND NOT ACCESSIBLE. I, THEREFORE, SPOKE TO HIS POLITICAL ASSISTANT MIZRACHI WHO WAS WELL BRIEFED NOT ONLY MY TALK WITH RABIN LAST NIGHT BUT ALSO ON SISCO'S CONVERSATION WITH DINITZ. I ASKED MIZRACHI TO CONVEY FOLLOWING TO RABIN AS SOON AS PRIME MINISTER FREE: 1. THAT WE COULD GIVE HIM CATEGORICAL ASSURANCES THAT FAHMY'S POSITION ON NETA CARGO WAS NOT ANTI-ISRAELI PLOY BUT GENUINE APPLICATION OF EGYPT'S

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COMMITMENTS UNDER OAU AGREEMENTS; 2. THAT FAHMY HAD

MADE CLEAR LATER TRANSIT OF CANAL BY RUMANIAN-ORIGIN SHIP WOULD ENCOUNTER NO PROBLEMS; 3. THAT WE HOPED TO HAVE RABIN'S FIRM ASSURANCE THAT SHIP WOULD ENTER CANAL ON OCT. 22; AND 4. THAT ISRAELIS SHOULD PROVIDE US SOONEST WITH FINE DETAILS ON OCT. 22-28 CARGO TRANSIT.

3. MIZRACHI SAID HE WOULD DO SO, BUT I SHOULD KNOW RABIN'S INITIAL REACTION TO DINITZ'S CABLE WAS NEGATIVE. PRIME MINISTER FELT THAT PHRASE "IF DISCOVERED" WAS PURE SUBTERFUGE SINCE EGYPTIANS DO NOT FOLLOW PRACTICE OF SEARCHING VESSEL TRANSITING CANAL. I TOLD MIZRACHI I FELT THIS WAS MISREADING OF EGYPTIAN POSITION THAT WHAT FAHMY MEANT WAS THAT IF EGYPTIANS WERE INFORMED IN ADVANCE OF SOUTH AFRICAN ORIGIN OR DESTINATION OF CARGO--AS THEY HAD BEEN IN ISRAELI CASE--THEY WOULD BE OBLIGED TO CONFISCATE. I URGED HIM TO SO INFORM RABIN AND TELL THE PRIME MINISTER THAT IN MY VIEW IT WOULD BE BAD MISTAKE TO TEST EGYPTIANS ON CURRENT CASE. WE HAD ENOUGH PROBLEMS WITHOUT ADDING THIS POTENTIALLY NASTY CONFRONTATION TO PRESENT ROSTER.

4. I SHALL REPORT RABIN'S REACTION TO ABOVE BY FLASH CABLE. TOON

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